

ECRH Notes

Ecumenical Center for Religion and Health, San Antonio, TX

September 11, 2001

What Now?: After the Terror

The pictures from New York, Washington, Pennsylvania and elsewhere will be burned into our memories for years to come. Many of us have friends and family in the effected areas. Many of our military families ponder what this will mean for them in the days and months to come.

As families move through the shock and begin picking up the pieces, the process will include stress management, dealing with loss and coping with uncertainty. In this time of trial many of us will turn to our communities of faith and religious leaders for support and counsel. Here are some things to keep in mind when dealing with disaster situations.

Pray in Your Own Way

“Cast your burden on the Lord.” The problem may feel bigger than we are; the remedy can be also. Prayer or meditation may be alone or with others. It may cover a range of feelings, from “My God, why have you forsaken me?” to “Into your hands I commit..” whatever the situation. Whether in expressive venting or receptive waiting, we can turn to a resource beyond ourselves.

Take Care of Your Stress and Grief

There are things we can do. God takes seriously, and wants us to take seriously, our feelings and needs. Stress is a natural response to a disaster, and our bodies have many ways of signaling this:

- Headaches
- Digestive Problems
- Aching Limbs
- Insomnia

- Irritability, frequent arguments
 - Restlessness
 - Moodiness
 - Loss of or Increased Appetite
 - Muscle Tension
 - Fatigue
 - Poor Memory
 - Difficulty Concentrating
 - Allergic Reactions
 - Anxiety Attacks
 - Depression
- Some tips from disaster relief materials

***Especially in bad times,
togetherness provides
mutual support for
everyone.”***

distributed by the American Red Cross outline things that you can do to relieve stress:

Keep the family together. Especially in bad times, togetherness provides mutual support for everyone.

Discuss your problems. Talk to family and friends. Share your anxieties. Let others talk to you to help release tension. Crying is a natural response to a disaster. It's also a great way to release pent-up emotions.

Rest often and eat well. You are more likely to suffer from stress and health problems when you are tired.

Being active helps, but don't overdo it. Your body must have proper rest and nourishment for you to keep going.

Set a manageable schedule.

There may be many things you can do to help. However, you can't do everything at once. Make a list of ways you can help and develop an action plan. Try to return to your natural routines as soon as you can.

Dear Friend in Faith,

We offer the following information trusting that it will be beneficial to you and those you serve. Please feel free to duplicate it, make reference to it, use it in sermons, put it on bulletin boards or in worship bulletins - wherever it is helpful. As always, we at The Ecumenical Center for Religion and Health are here to help. Please contact us if we can be of further assistance!

Sincerely,

**Paul A. Parks, D. Min.
Executive Director**

Routines give you something predictable to depend upon.

Watch for signs of stress.

The recovery period can be long, hard, and confusing. Don't be surprised if you are tense or see signs of stress in family members. Often other people will notice problems before you do. Listen to them.

Seek help. If you cannot shake feelings of despair or other telltale signs of stress, get professional help. Many people need help to cope with their situation following a disaster.

ECRH counselors are available to assist with stress management, grief and loss as well as a variety of other situations. Appointments can be made by calling (210) 616-0885. The Center main office is located at 8310 Ewing Halsell Dr. at Wurzbach.

Web page www.ecrh.org

Victims and Friends Need Time for Refueling, Reflection and Worship

According to James L. Powell, Ph.D., speaking on behalf of the United Methodist Committee on Relief, "a disaster is a process of not being

"The primary task in disaster relief is not the delivery of food, clothing or shelter but the restoration of social support systems."

able to mobilize social support systems. ...[The] primary task in disaster recovery [is] not the delivery of food, clothing or shelter but the restoration of social support systems. Accomplishment of this may require distributing food, providing shelter, and giving clothing, but that is not the focus. ...A disaster is so disruptive that restoring the equilibrium has to be the primary goal. To attempt more than that is to risk adding to the disaster by increasing the number of changes the individual has to cope with, increasing health risks, and ultimately risking harm to the community's ability to function. ...When social systems have collapsed, there is a sense of loss and despair that can best be restored

by learning that you can still function and can still have an impact on the environment around you."

Dr. Powell advises that victims and volunteers must avoid burnout by learning to pace themselves. He says, "Refueling to prevent burnout has many aspects, one of which is worship. In a disaster, there is frequently guilt over being involved in contemplation instead of action, but ... keeping alive the focus as a servant of God may be more important. ... Not only does worship restore the right relationship ... in this world

"The disaster situation is often so overwhelming that people lose sight of their spiritual needs."

which God has created, it also allows a venting and cleansing that is needed." Dr. Powell adds, "The disaster situation is often so overwhelming that people lose sight of their spiritual needs. The worship of God is the stable element that

Ecumenical Center for Religion and Health **For help or information...**

you may contact any of the ECRH Counseling staff at (210) 616-0885, for assistance to you or members of your congregation during this time of need. Staff counselors are available for consultation or counseling, for individuals, couples and families. Fee subsidy is available.

Clinical Staff

Royce Calhoun, Ph.D.
Homer Bain, Ph.D.
Helen Stensrud, M.A., L.P.C.
Kay Watt, M.A.P.M., L.P.C.
Lucia Carter, M.A.
Daniel Thompson, Ph.D.
Randy Lyle, Ph.D.
Charles McDaniels, M.A.
Christine Lopez Ariza, M.A.

survives the changes. The church disaster worker carries little power of his or her own but has the power to inspire others to use their own resources."

The Ecumenical Center For Religion and Health

"Healing and Growth Through Knowledge and Faith"
Counseling Services for Individuals, Couples and Families
Pastoral Education to Strengthen Ministers and Congregations
Career and Business Consulting for a Changing Time
Bio-ethical Studies: Asking the Questions of a New Age

The Center is an ecumenical force for hope, dedicated to alleviating suffering and facilitating spiritual, physical and emotional healing and growth for our community and God's world.

**8310 Ewing Halsell Drive at Wurzbach
San Antonio, Tx 78229**

**PH: 210-616-0885
Fax: 210-616-0845**

Website: www.ecrh.org